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## **Kant on Christianity, Religion, and Politics: Three Hopes, Three Limits<sup>i</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article makes two key claims in succession. First of all, Kant's own religious hope is significantly and studiously distanced from the traditions of Christianity that he would have received, in ways that have not yet been fully, or widely, appreciated. Kant makes an ideal moral community the object of our religious hopes, and not the transcendent God of the tradition. Secondly, Kant nonetheless has a notion of transcendence at play, but in a strikingly different key to traditional Christianity. Both concepts of transcendence, the Christian and the Kantian, deflate, in their own distinctive ways, our hopes for politics and history, in a way that can unsettle the certainties, and vanities, of both the traditional theologian and the secular Rawlsian. The Christian hope is not the same as Kant's religious hope, and Kant's hope is religious, and distinct, in origin, depth, and ambition, from his more limited hope for politics.

### **KEY WORDS**

Kant   Theology   Religion   Christianity   History   Hope   Progress   Politics

## **Kant on Christianity, Religion, and Politics: Three Hopes, Three Limits**

‘To the extent that Christianity is taken seriously’, John Rawls reflects, ‘it could have deleterious effects on one’s character’<sup>ii</sup>. Rawls describes himself in his last two years at Princeton as ‘deeply concerned with theology and its doctrines’, and had considered going ‘to the seminary’, deciding to ‘wait until the war was over’. In the ‘last year or so of the war’, ‘all that changed’, and a range of Christian doctrines ‘all became impossible for me to take seriously’, not ‘in the sense that the evidence for them was weak or doubtful’ but for ‘moral’ reasons, concerning ‘ideas of right and justice’<sup>iii</sup>.

A pronounced strand in Rawls’ critique is the tendency that he found, in ‘Christianity’ (Rawls paints here on a broad canvas) of identifying a particular group, or cause, in history with God’s will and power, in a way that offers false and dangerous consolation to believers. Rawls recalls being appalled by a sermon given in the field, in 1944, by a military Pastor: ‘he said that God aimed our bullets at the Japanese while God protected us from theirs’. ‘Christian doctrine’, Rawls reflected, ‘ought not to be used for that’<sup>iv</sup>. This line of criticism, shared by others, and not the less forceful for being vague, will be in the hinterland throughout my discussion.

This article makes two key claims in succession. First of all, Kant’s own religious hope is significantly and studiously distanced from the traditions of Christianity that he would have received, in ways that have not yet been fully, and widely, appreciated<sup>v</sup>. The headline claim will be that Kant makes an ideal moral community the object of our religious hopes, and not the transcendent God of the tradition. The second claim will be that Kant, nonetheless, has a notion of transcendence at play, but in a strikingly different key to traditional Christianity. Both concepts of transcendence, the Christian and the Kantian, deflate, in their own distinctive ways, our hopes for politics and history, in a way that can unsettle the certainties, and vanities, of both the traditional theologian and the

secular Rawlsian. The Christian hope is not the same as Kant's religious hope, and Kant's hope is religious, and distinct, in origin, depth, and ambition, from his more limited hope for politics. In short: where the Christian hopes for another time, the Rawlsian has hopes for this time, and Kant hopes to be in a space other than time.

## II Kant's Religious Hope

Some commentators have deflated the content of Kant's religious hope, effectively identifying it, without remainder, as one of Kant's 'regulative ideas', which Kant describes as 'heuristic fictions' (A 771/B 799), which serve the needs of reason, without claiming the status of true beliefs<sup>vi</sup>. There is some truth to this identification, but also some error<sup>vii</sup>. In theoretical contexts, the idea of God is, for Kant, merely regulative, a 'condition of the application of reason to nature' (A 826/B 854). But such regulative belief, Kant insists, should 'not be called practical' (A 826/B 854). Whilst 'there is something unstable' about merely regulative belief in God, because of 'difficulties that come up in speculation' (A 827/B 855), 'it is entirely otherwise', Kant writes, 'in the case of moral belief' (A 828/B 856). The purpose of the moral law can only be achieved if 'there be a God and a future world', and Kant claims to 'know with complete certainty' that 'no one else knows of any other conditions that can guarantee properly ordered happiness' (A 828/B 856). 'I will inexorably believe', Kant writes, 'in the existence of God and a **future life**, and I am sure that nothing can make these beliefs unstable' (A 828/B 856; see also A 742-744/B 770-772; *CPrR*, 5: 4, 108-114, 121, 125, 134-135; *LPR*, 28: 1084; *OIT*, 8: 139; *CJ*, 5: 546).

Determined exponents of a more deflated Kant may find this article overcommitted to the claim that Kant nurtures a genuine religious hope. Nonetheless, the article can, I hope, be profitably travelled with, some of the way. On any account of the matter, Kant uses the language of the 'highest good', and this concept has a certain shape, whatever its epistemic or metaphysical status. The key claim,

that Kant's exposition of the concept of the highest good is explicitly distanced from Christianity as he would have received it, can adapt itself variously to inflated or deflated readings of what Kant's religious hope amounts to. This precise wording is important. I have no intention of policing the wider application of a concept such as 'Christianity', which is rich, porous, shifting, and historically multi-faceted, with cultural as well as doctrinal dimensions. Indeed, after Kant, strands of Christianity become reconfigured in heavily Kantian terms, such that it requires acts of scholarship and imagination in order to appreciate how radically and explicitly Kant moves away from the traditions that he himself would have received. I also do not deny the significance of wider Christian cultural influences, for example, from Pietism, upon aspects of Kant's moral formation, development and theory<sup>viii</sup>. The claim is precisely what it is: that in relation to the concept of the 'highest good', the lynchpin and culmination of Kant's philosophical theology, Kant distances himself, in his written works, from the philosophical and theological claims contained within the Christian tradition, as he would have received it.

This distancing from Christianity, as he received it, is not found in Kant's characterization of the divine nature, where what he writes is largely compatible with what the tradition would call the 'preambles' of faith: those aspects of the divine nature that our reason can to some degree approach, without the articles of faith that rely upon divine revelation given in scripture. For Kant, practical reason 'inexorably leads to the concept of a single, most perfect, and rational primordial being' (A 814/B 842), a being of the 'highest perfection', a 'highest and all-sufficient being' (A 640/B 668; see also A 575-579/B 603-607; A 592-3/B 620-1; A 640/B 668; *Coll*, 27: 306; *CPrR*, 5: 140; *LPR*, 28: 1033-34; *R* 6248; *MV*, 29: 945). In less familiar passages, Kant also aligns himself to a distinctively Platonic strand, taken up in part of the Christian tradition, which talks about creation as a diffusion of a plenitude of divine goodness. We find this notion, for example, in Aquinas, who writes that it is 'evident from the very nature and definition of the good' that 'the good is diffusive

of itself and of being'. Such 'diffusion befits God', by virtue of which 'God is the cause of being for other things (*SCG*, 1.37).

Kant invokes a similar notion of divine diffusion in the 1780s, telling us that:

God cognizes himself by means of his highest understanding as the all-sufficient ground of everything possible. He is most well-pleased with his unlimited faculty as regards all positive things, and it is just this well-pleasedness (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) with himself which causes him to make these possibilities actual. (*LPR*, 28: 1061)

Kant relates such a conception of self-cognition and self-diffusion with the category of the highest good, writing that the deity 'although subjectively in need of no external thing, still cannot be thought to shut himself up within himself but rather' must be thought 'to be determined to produce the highest good beyond himself just by his consciousness of his all-sufficiency' (*TP*, 8: 280n).

At this point, where we seem close to the Christian tradition, we come across the first, and, in some ways, all significant difference. In scholastic theology, the highest good of creation, as the fitting diffusion of divine goodness, is always identified, not with a perfect world, but with the beatific vision of God enjoyed by the blessed, of which the incarnation, the hypostatic union of God and man, is the paradigm and the means. In a way that would be quite alien to Kant's religious hope, the highest good is, above all, Christ, and not Christ as an example of a perfect Kantian, but as a living reality with whom we are in relationship, such that through Christ, we can enjoy the life of God in the beatific vision. In Aquinas, as Aquinas exegetes the theological tradition, we find a Platonic logic of diffusion leading inexorably to Christ:

It belongs to the essence of the highest good (*summum bonum*) to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature, and this is brought about chiefly by “His so joining created nature to Himself that one Person is made up of these three - the Word, a soul and flesh”, as Augustine says (*De Trin. xiii*). Hence it is manifest that it was fitting that God should become incarnate. (*ST*, III, 1.1)

The beatific vision, achieved in and through Christ, was, for all scholastic theologians, the ‘highest created good’: creation at its highest point, enjoying God’s own self-communication. Such perilously generalized assertions about ‘all scholastic theologians’ are made possible by virtue of the common core of scholastic theology. To become a Master of Theology in the medieval university system, one was required to write an appreciative commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Book of Sentences*. Lombard’s *Sentences* are largely a compilation of passages from Augustine, who is clear that God is the highest uncreated good, and the beatific vision of God the highest created good. There are nuances, differences and distinctions within the medieval tradition, about the relative priority of our willing or knowing in the beatific vision, about how precisely we might say God is ‘seen’, and about whether our desire is satiated, or continuously expanding into God. These subtleties need not concern us, though, as the largest differences in scholastic thought about the ‘highest good’ amount to very little, in comparison to the difference between all of them and Kant’s conception.

Kant agrees with the tradition that God, as the ‘Supreme Being’ (*OPA*, 2: 151), the ‘All of Reality’ (A 575/B 603), is the highest uncreated good, or, as Kant puts it, the ‘highest original good’ (A 810/B 839). The rupture emerges, though, with Kant’s account of the highest created good, which, for Kant, does not revolve around the enjoyment of, and participation in, God. What ‘alone constitutes the highest good’, Kant writes in the first *Critique* is ‘happiness in exact proportion with the morality of rational beings, through which they are worthy of it’ (A 814/B 842).

The lexical field that Kant explores, when discussing his conception of the highest good, faithfully maps onto the terms that are associated, in the medieval tradition, with the concept of the ‘*summum bonum*’. To avoid any arbitrary comparison of scholastic theology with Kant, I will restrict myself to discussing Kant’s own lexical choices, which include ‘*summum bonum*’, ‘beatitude’, the ‘final end’ of creation, and the glorification and honoring of God, which in the medieval tradition, are the terms associated with the enjoyment of God’s diffusion of God’s goodness. In each case, I attempt to understand Kant’s distinctive, and quietly subverting, usage, in relation to the tradition from which he receives these categories. Kant’s most dramatic discontinuity with the traditions he receives, I will suggest, comes when he rejects the idea that God could be an ‘object’ that is good without limit for our will or practical reason, alongside his rejection of the medieval notion of divine-human ‘concursum’. Towards the end of this section, I will dispatch the suggestion that Kant might, nonetheless, be a sort of Lutheran.

Let us begin, then, with Kant on beatitude. For Aquinas, beatitude ‘consists only in the contemplation of God’, as ‘the ultimate end of man is knowledge of God’ (*SCG*, III.I, 25.12). In discussing the ‘prospect of a future of *beatitude*’ (*eine Aussicht in eine selige Zukunft*), Kant explains that

This is the expression that reason employs to designate a complete *well-being* independent of all contingent causes in the world. (*CPrR*, 5: 123n; see also *CPrR*, 5: 118)

The precise phrasing here is noteworthy: beatitude ‘is the expression that reason employs’ (*CPrR*, \*5: 123). The project of translating the categories of historical revealed religion into the ‘religion of pure practical reason’ is not something that Kant only begins in his 1793 text *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. According to Kant’s translation, beatitude is a state where ‘nature and



morals come into a harmony' (*CPrR*, 5: 128), where 'rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law' (*CPrR*, 5: 128). The 'Christian principle of morals', he explains, is 'not theological':

It does not make cognition of God and his will the basis of these laws but only of the attainment of the highest good subject to the condition of observing these laws. (*CPrR*, 5: 129)

Beatitude is the state of undistracted devotion to the moral law. God is needed to support and reward the attainment of this state, but we should not overlook the fact that beatitude is no longer, as it is for the tradition, itself the 'cognition of God and his will'.

In the scholastic tradition, the notion of the 'glorification' or 'glory' of God stands, quite precisely, for the enjoyment of the communication of divine goodness, expressed paradigmatically in the beatific vision. Kant's continues his translation project. He reflects that when thinkers describe the 'highest good' (*das höchste Gut*), or 'the end of creation' (*den Zweck der Schöpfung*), as 'the glory of God' (*die Ehre Gottes*), they have 'perhaps hit upon the best expression (*den besten Ausdruck*)' (*CPrR*, 5: 131), a phrasing which nicely indicates Kant's self-conscious reconfiguring of the tradition:

For, nothing glorifies God (*ehrt Gott*) more than what is most estimable in the world, respect for his command, observance of the holy duty that his law lays upon us, when there is added to this his magnificent plan of crowning such a beautiful order with corresponding happiness. (*CPrR*, 5: 131; see also *CJ*, 5: 449)

Although softly, even piously, put, we note that ‘glorification’ is no longer, at all, the enjoyment of God’s self-communication, but, rather, observance of the moral law, met with proportionate happiness.

Because God and the highest good are so intimately linked in Kant’s thought, and because Kant himself, at times, praises a Christian conception of the highest good in comparison with Epicurean and Stoic conceptions, it is easy to get the impression that Kant is following established Christian patterns of thought. In part based on such passages, the commentator Frederick Beiser affirms that the most ‘striking aspect’ of Kant’s reflections on the highest good, is ‘Kant’s self-conscious allegiance to the Christian, indeed Protestant, tradition’: ‘it is a point that cannot be stressed enough: Kant saw his ethics as Christian doctrine.’<sup>ix</sup>

It is true that Kant saw aspects of Christian doctrine as compatible with his ethics, but the difference between Kant and traditional Christian patterns of thought with reference to the highest good can be summarized precisely: for traditional Christianity the highest good is the communication of God’s own being, paradigmatically expressed in the Incarnation and the beatific vision; for Kant, the highest good is a state of perfect justice, where happiness is distributed in proportion to virtue, and where both virtue and happiness are defined without essential reference to God. Happiness, Kant tells us, is ‘the state of a rational being in the world in the whole of whose existence *everything goes according to his wish and will*’ (*CPrR*, 5: 124; see also *GW*, 4: 428, 438), where the wish and will of a *rational* being must be determined to virtue, which consists in following the moral law, such that

Morality consists in the laws of the generation of true happiness from freedom in general. (*R* 7199, 19: 272-73; see also A 809-814/B 837-842)

In the Christian conception, God is the central constituent element of the highest created good, as that which is enjoyed, known and loved in this state; in Kant's schema, the highest good is a 'world of intelligences' acting in 'accordance with universal and necessary moral laws' (A 815/B 843). God is in this community, certainly, as a sovereign (*CPrR*, 5: 128-132) and a Holy Will (*GW*, 4: 414), but the movement and structure on this conception is horizontal, between rational moral agents (of which God is an ideal instance), rather than vertical, between creatures and the creator.

It worth being attentive to the precise terms in which Kant singles out Christianity for praise, in contrast to Stoicism and Epicureanism. He writes that:

The doctrine of Christianity, even if it is not regarded as a religious doctrine, gives on this point (*in diesem Stücke*) [the relationship between happiness and virtue] a concept of the highest good (of the kingdom of God) which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason. (*CPrR*, 5: 127-128)

Kant does not say that Christianity is, as such, true. He says that 'on this point' Christianity has understood something that Stoicism and Epicureanism do not see, which is that 'happiness and morality are specifically quite *different* elements of the highest good' (*CPrR*, 5: 112), rather than happiness being found in the consciousness of one's morality (as in Stoicism), or in the moralized curtailing of one's desires (as in Epicureanism). The heavy lifting in this claim is done by the term 'the strictest demand of practical reason', in relation to which, when considering the 'precept of morals', Christianity has an 'advantage' over other schools of thought (*CPrR*, 5: 127\*).

Kant's most dramatic theological move, which, I submit, unambiguously reveals the philosopher distancing himself from all previous Christian theology, Lutheran or Catholic, is not where we might expect. It is buried in the *Groundwork*, and in a rather recondite discussion in chapter two of

the ‘Analytic’ of the second *Critique*. In the *Groundwork*, Kant searches for that which is ‘unconditionally necessary’, and for that which can be considered ‘good without limitation’. In searching for the unconditioned, Kant is looking for a reality or principle that is sufficient, by itself and in itself, to move our will. Kant writes that ‘if the will’ seeks the law ‘in a property of any of its objects - *heteronomy* always results’:

The will in that case does not give itself the law; instead the object (*das Object*), by means of its relation to the will, gives the law to it. (*GW*, II. 4: 441)

We can only understand what Kant is doing here, if we grasp what he means by an ‘object’. An ‘object’ can mean any reality whatsoever, of any ontological texture, created or uncreated, and not only empirical ‘objects’ or created substances. An ‘object’, in this sense, can be something as mundane as a table, but it can also be the ‘essence of poetry’, or the uncreated perfection that is God. The ‘essence of poetry’ can be the object of our thought, without being an object. Just so with God. When Kant insists that no object, external to the will’s own activity, can be good without limit, and so have unconditioned value for our practical reason and will, he means precisely what he says: all objects are rejected, no matter how elevated, created or uncreated. Kant’s departure from the theological tradition, lies in his denial that even God could constitute an unconditioned and good-without-limitation object for our practical reason and will. No theologian had ever before offered a similar denial, or anything close to one. Rather, the universal claim in the prior tradition, which we find intact in Kant’s sources such as Leibniz<sup>x</sup>, is that only God is the proper and final ‘object’ (*obiectus*) of our willing and knowing.

Commentators do not always see the drama of Kant’s move here, and focus on Kant’s more obvious targets, such as commands, sensations and rewards. But Kant is clear that he rejects all objects that could be presented to the will. In the *Groundwork*, having rejected the more obvious failed

candidates for the unconditioned good (pleasurable sensations, rewards, honour and fortune), Kant turns to the very ‘principle of perfection’ (*GW*, II, 4: 444; see also *GW*, 4: 410; *CPrR*, 5: 64). Kant’s explicit target here is the ‘universal practical philosophy’ of Christian Wolff, where the identification of perfection and God is clear<sup>xi</sup>. In the second *Critique*, Kant comments that ‘the occasioning ground of all the errors of philosophers’, when searching for that which is good without limitation, is the search for ‘an object of the will’ (*CPrR*, 5: 64). The point is that it is not the unworthiness of the object that concerns Kant, but the reception of anything external to the will whatsoever, because, as Kant writes ‘anything which presents itself as an object of the will...is excluded from the determining grounds of the will called the unconditionally good’ (*CPrR*, 5: 74), even when the object is ‘happiness’, ‘perfection’ or the ‘will of God’ (*CPrR*, 5: 64). Any ‘principle’, external and prior to the will’s own ‘universal lawgiving’ (*CPrR*, 5: 64), is ‘heteronomy’ (*CPrR*, 5: 64).

Kant’s proscribing of external objects is not disturbed by passages, from the ‘Dialectic’ of the second *Critique*, where Kant identifies the highest good itself as the object of pure practical reason and the will. Here he speaks of the ‘highest good’ as the ‘whole object of pure practical reason’ (*CPrR*, 5: 119; see also *CPrR*, 5: 115, 122, 124, 129). Because, for Kant, the ‘highest good’, for our will and practical reason, is not something external, such as God, but is rather the full achievement and product of our own universal lawgiving, were it to be, in fact, universal. Even if an external object, God, is needed to guarantee the possibility of this, what is hoped for is not itself an external object, but the flourishing of our own autonomous lawgiving, where the will ‘has as its object’, Kant writes, ‘itself as giving universal law’ (*CPrR*, 5: 432).

For Kant, freedom is destroyed when the will is moved at all, even if the external object that moves the will is ‘perfection’ itself (*GW*, 4: 410). ‘Freedom cannot be divided’, Kant insists, such that ‘the human being is either entirely free or not free at all’ (*R* 4229; 17: 467). Freedom must be a ‘faculty

of starting...events from itself, i.e., without the causality of the cause itself having to begin, and hence without need for any other ground to determine its beginning' (*Pr*, 4: 344; see also A 446/B 474). This has the implication, for Kant, that if God, who Kant calls an 'alien cause' (*CPrR*, 5: 95; see also *CPrR*, 5: 100-101; *ML<sub>I</sub>* 28: 267; *R* 4221, 4225, 4337, 5121), acts upon our will, our freedom is destroyed, where freedom, for Kant, is the 'inner value of the world' (*V-Mo/Mron*, 27: 1482). Kant has a 'zero-sum' conception of the relationship between divine and human action: for the human to be free, God must withdraw. Kant explicitly rejects the traditional notion of '*concursum*' or 'concurrence', whereby divine and human action can be understood, uniquely, as running together in a single undivided free action:

It is not permitted to think of God's *concursum* with free actions...If God concurs with morality, then the human being has no moral worth, because nothing can be imputed to him. (*DR*, 28: 1309; see also *R* 4748, 5632, 6019, 6118, 6121, 6167, 6169, 6171, 8083, *NTV*, 28: 1207-13; *PP*, 8: 362, *MK<sub>2</sub>*, 28: 811; *ML<sub>I</sub>* 28: 347, *MD*, 28: 648)<sup>xii</sup>

In denying *concursum*, Kant squarely sets his face against medieval theology. And in insisting that our true freedom comes from ourselves alone, in relation to the good 'we ourselves must *do*' (*Rel*, 6: 53), and where the will has 'as its object', not God, but 'itself as giving universal law' (*CPrR*, 5: 432), Kant also offends the deepest Lutheran instinct that we have no freedom, and no goodness, except that which comes as a sheer gift from God. For the Lutheran, our moral transformation towards virtue ('sanctification'), depends *entirely* upon divine action, and follows from our being justified by Christ, and is in no way the cause of this justification. 'Free will', Luther writes in the *Heidelberg Disputation*, 'is dead, as demonstrated by the dead whom the Lord has raised up, as the holy teachers of the church say'<sup>xiii</sup>. For Kant, if there is grace, a 'divine supplement', it must come, if at all, only consequent upon our own free action, when we have made ourselves 'antecedently worthy of receiving' the grace (*Rel* 6:44). In contrast, Luther writes that 'the person who believes

that he can obtain grace by doing what is in him', 'adds sin to sin so that he becomes doubly guilty'<sup>xiv</sup>.

All of this is not to deny the significance of the positive ways in which Kant conceives of God being involved in upholding and maintaining the state which is the highest good. God is the creator and sustainer of noumenal substances (*CPrR*, 5: 100-102; *LPR*, 28: 1104). God is the sovereign in the Kingdom of Ends, and we should regard all duties '*as divine commands*' (*CPrR*, 5: 129), although the content of these duties is given in the moral law, which is determined independently of the divine will. God as the Holy Will can, unlike us, do no other than follow the moral law (*GW*, 4: 412), and will always be, therefore, a first among equals within the moral community of the Kingdom of Ends. God as omniscient knows our virtue, and as omnipotent can ensure that happiness is appropriately distributed, and as benevolent, will do so (*CPrR*, 5: 124-125; *Rel*, 6: 73-76; *CJ*, 5: 450\*). God provides a supplement to our own moral efforts, in our constantly precarious attempts to be good (*Rel*, 6: 44-53, 173-174), although this can seem to run aground on Kant's own requirements for justice, and for genuinely imputable free moral action. More speculatively, there are fragmentary hints in Kant, especially in his final writings, that God is in some sense identified with the divinity within us, which is our own legislating and following of the moral law (*OP*, 22: 121-22).

All of these strands are important and *prima facie* evidence of Kant's genuine religiosity. But all of them depart from the central claim of the Christian tradition, which is that God, and not just the moral law which God necessarily commands, is the all-satiating end-point and final object of our loving and knowing, and where God is, in the technical terms employed here, an external object (and so not co-extensive with our own moral law-giving), who nonetheless, and uniquely, acts interiorly within creatures, in all they do, in a way that does not violate, but constitutes, their

freedom. In relation to this claim, for the traditional theologian, Kant's God seems awkwardly on the outskirts of the Kingdom of Ends, or to disappear entirely within it.

One sometimes find the claim, for instance in John Rawls, that Kant's conception of the highest good is a surviving 'Leibnizian remnant' in Kant's writings, which Kant should have removed, if he had been faithful to his own philosophical self-discipline and ethical standards<sup>xv</sup>. But when we get down to the details, we find that, as with Lutheranism, not much of what Leibniz would affirm is left remaining. For Kant, God is not a proper external object for our practical reason and will, and loving and knowing God is not our highest good, in contrast to Leibniz's repeated and traditioned assertion that God is the only proper object of our knowing and willing, and where knowing and loving God is our final end and our highest good, achieved by God's concurring action within our freedom. 'God alone is our immediate external object', writes Leibniz, '*He alone is our light*'<sup>xvi</sup>, where the greatest happiness is when God is the 'object' of our love<sup>xvii</sup>. What remains, from both Leibniz and Luther, are remnants of remnants, gutted of their traditional content, and reconstrued in terms that are vividly and emphatically Kant's own, thoroughly motivated by principles deep in his wider philosophy. Kant's religion is properly Kantian.

Within Kant's religion of pure practical reason we can find a philosophically well-motivated and, on some construals, epistemically disciplined (in Kant's terms) post-Christian philosophical theology. 'Post-Christian' in its rejection of core strands of doctrinal commitment, as Kant receives them; also, perhaps, 'pre-Christian', if we follow the tendrils of some of Kant's priorities and commitments back through Leibniz, and into a renaissance Platonic humanism, which we know to have been strong in seventeenth-century Germany, mediated through figures such as Thomasius and Scherzer. Although I cannot do more here than gesture towards it, I would suggest that it is at least as illuminating, and probably more charitable, to investigate Kant's religious hope as an epistemically-disciplined and adapted form of Platonism, albeit sometimes dressed in Christianized



language, as it is to regard these hopes as a lopped-off, derivative, or heretical schism from Christianity. For Kant, as in Platonism, human flourishing involves a deepening participation in a structure of reason that transcends the individual and the particular, where reason seeks its resting place in the unconditioned. Autonomy, whereby we give ourselves the rational law which is itself the shape of our own grasping of the rational law, can be construed as a variant on a perennial classical paradigm, whereby that which has unconditioned value is thought thinking itself, and rational will willing itself. In the 1790s Kant reflects that ‘a hidden idea of philosophy has long been present among men’ (*LPE*, 29: 9). This hidden idea goes back to ‘the ancient Greek philosophers’ whose ‘principal object’ is ‘the destination of man, and the means to achieve it’ (*LPE*, 29:9). The true ‘Idea of the philosopher’, as Kant puts it, is expressed by Plato’s Socrates, as one seeking, and never quite reaching, the ‘Idea of wisdom’ (*LPE*, 29: 8; see also A 314-318/B 271-75). This will be a hint that I return to in the final moments of this article. We turn now, though, to a consideration of Kant’s hopes for politics and history.

### **III Kant’s Political Hope**

The highest created good, for Kant, is a moral community, a ‘great whole’, a ‘systematic unity of ends’ in a ‘world of intelligences’, acting in ‘accordance with universal and necessary moral laws’ (A 815/B 843; see also *CPrR*, 5: 110-113). In the state of the highest created good, we are not centrally referred or oriented to the transcendence of God. The notion of ‘transcendence’ derives etymologically from the Latin term *transcendere*, ‘to go beyond’. The concept of transcendence need not enter our thought as an absolute presence, possession, and foundation, but can act subversively upon all our thinking, by marking a space that ‘goes beyond’ our knowledge, experience and competence. Everything that is, can be relativized, and rendered passive and dependent, by virtue of the transcendence which goes beyond it.

Amongst other things, the Christian notion of ‘transcendence’ draws our attention to God being the uncreated and inexhaustible source of all that is created, where every texture of creation is equidistantly and totally dependent upon God (who always ‘goes beyond’), and where God is in no sense reciprocally dependent upon the creation. My eventual claim will be that Kant does have a robust and ethico-religiously relevant conception of the transcendent, that which always and everywhere ‘goes beyond’, provided by his transcendental idealism, but that the structure of this transcendence, this going-beyond, is significantly different from the Christian tradition which he received. There are two groups of commentators, who do not otherwise come together, but who join in not seeing this differently structured transcendence in Kant: traditional theologians, especially those with an Augustinian strand in their thought, and secular Rawlsians (or at least one Rawlsian, Rawls himself). First of all, I will set out how this shared lack of appreciation for Kant’s differently structured transcendence manifests itself. We find that it becomes especially apparent and distorting when reflecting upon Kant’s hopes for politics and history. Both the Rawlsian and the Augustinian theologian think that Kant has significant faith, using the word advisedly, in human reason and progress in history. I show in turn that Rawls celebrates this, whilst the theologian laments it. I then move onto consider how Kant’s distinctive conception of transcendence subverts the hopes for history and politics imputed to him from both sides.

Having rejected what Rawls calls the ‘Leibnizian remnant’ of the highest good, in Kant’s writings, Rawls salvages a ‘reasonable faith’ in the ‘Kingdom of Ends’. Such reasonable faith, Rawls insists, ‘does require certain beliefs about our nature and the social world’. We ‘must believe’, Rawls writes

that the course of human history is progressively improving, and not becoming steadily worse, or that it does not fluctuate in perpetuity from bad to good and good to bad.<sup>xviii</sup>

Such improvement will lead, Rawls avows, to ‘a peaceful international society (or confederation) of peoples, each people organized as a state with some kind of a constitutional representative regime’. To ‘abandon this faith’, Rawls insists, is ‘to give up on peace and democracy, and that we can never do as long as we affirm both the moral law and human freedom’.<sup>xix</sup>

It can seem, initially, that Rawls is in continuity with Kant’s own hopes for historical progress, when Kant writes that ‘the great artist *nature*’ brings about progress in history<sup>xx</sup>. Kant tracks a progression from a state of unsocial sociability, expressed in antagonism and cooperation, which generates skill and culture, bringing about both war and ‘the *spirit of commerce*’. All of this we can regard as leading, in the future, to a state of perpetual peace, safeguarded by a cosmopolitan world order (*IUH*, 8:21, 27; *PP*, 8: 360, 368; *TP*, 8: 310, and *APV*, 7: 322). When viewed from a moral perspective, Kant calls such progress in history ‘providence’ (*IUH*, 8:30; *PP*, 8: 361-62), which although not in itself a consideration that justifies belief in God, ‘serves’, as does any indication of teleology in nature, as a ‘desired confirmation of the moral argument [for God], insofar as nature is thus capable of displaying something analogous to the (moral) ideas of reason’ (*CJ*, 5: 479; see also *TP*, 8: 308-309; A807/B835)<sup>xxi</sup>. The ambition for this ‘progress’ can be extended, if we add, to the essays on history, Kant’s interpretation of the concept of the ‘church’ in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Reason Alone*. Here Kant construes the notion of the ‘church invisible’ as expressing the hope for a universal ‘ethico-civil’ community, a ‘free, universal and enduring union of hearts’ (*Rel*, 6: 102; see also *Rel*, 6: 94-95). It is understandable that commentators, and not only Rawls, ascribe to Kant a confidence in moral progress in history, or, at least, to the notion that legal and political progress is in some essential way ‘preparatory’ towards moral progress<sup>xxii</sup>.

Rawls insists that ‘religious beliefs are not needed’ for his ‘practical faith’<sup>xxiii</sup> in progress. We can go further. Christian religious belief, at least when containing a strong Augustinian strand, is not only not needed, but positively antithetical to such faith. The contemporary theologian Charles

Mathewes objects, primarily upon ethical grounds, to Kantian moral arguments for the value of faith in God: ‘such arguments’, he complains, ‘suggest that God’s value lies in underwriting, orienting, and energizing our moral projects’<sup>xxiv</sup>, expressed in various forms of belief in progress. In contrast, a certain sort of theologian will draw attention to what Karl Barth names as the ‘essential, sharp, acid and disintegrating’ absolute ‘distance’ between God and creatures.<sup>xxv</sup> This distance is typically worked out in terms of our temporality. For Augustine, we live ‘*in hoc saeculo*’, in this age (*saeculum*) or time, from which, etymologically the notion of the ‘secular’ derived<sup>xxvi</sup>. The ‘secular’, in this sense, describes a period of time from the creation until judgement day. We live in ‘this time’, waiting and enduring for the ‘new time’, the *saecula saeculorum*, the ‘age of ages’, which is brought about not by our efforts and achievements, but by divine action. All our existence in ‘this time’, the secular, is structurally limited by imperfection, longing and sin.<sup>xxvii</sup>

The only appropriate pattern of life within this framework is one understood as ‘*peregrinatio*’, pilgrimage, wandering, or as the contemporary theologian Charles Mathews puts it, ‘enduring’ life ‘during the world’<sup>xxviii</sup>. Such ascetic enduring, as Mathews describes it, is a ‘matter of vulnerability more than toughness’, about ‘learning to suffer in the right way’<sup>xxix</sup>. The yearning for ‘transcendence’, Mathews comments, is ‘typically misunderstood’ (not least by Christians), and should not be construed as ‘otherworldly’, in the sense that we are perhaps ‘made for another place - a metaphysical Mars, perhaps’, whilst ‘for some obscure reason’ we are ‘trapped in this one’<sup>xxx</sup>. Rather, ‘Christians are not otherworldly, but most fundamentally “other-temporalitied”’: “The world” is more primordially an era than a place’<sup>xxxi</sup>. Mathewes talks of living within a ‘tensive structure’ of ‘commitment and longing’, where, as much as anything, we must ‘cultivating appropriate dissatisfactions’<sup>xxxii</sup>.

The contrasting and undercutting work done by transcendence can have a sharp edge politically. Specifically, it should block the identification of particular groups or causes with God, which

Rawls, rightly, found a distressing feature of Christianity ‘in the field’ (‘God aims our bullets’). Such a conception of transcendence will undercut any confidence in, or even a hopeful orientation towards, historical and political progress. The Augustine commentator Paul Griffiths reflects that an approach that emphasizes *peregrinatio* will find ‘most kinds of political progressivism (the view that we can, in this age, significantly improve our politics)’ to be ‘utopian’, such that progressivism ‘may never be endorsed by Christians’.<sup>xxxiii</sup> ‘The outcome’, Griffiths writes, of even our best efforts, will always be, in a formal sense, exactly the same’: ‘an unpredictable blend of the good and the dreadful’<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

Curiously mirroring the ethical concerns about Christianity, expressed above by Rawls, we find a constellation of Christian thinkers, broadly in an Augustinian tradition, begin to articulate a set of ethical concerns about Kantian hope: specifically, that it is, in a sense, too religious, or more precisely, too religious about what reason and human action can do *in hoc saeculo*, in the ‘secular’. If the theologian was to be mischievously pedantic, she might suggest that Rawls’ Kant risks not being ‘secular enough’, according at least to the concept’s eschatological etymology, where the significance of ‘this time’, and its local aspirations, are suspended and relativized. Rawls accuses Christianity of absolutizing human projects, whilst the theologian finds in Rawls, and Kant, the same absolutizing move, with its own peculiar dangers, if and when there is any self-satisfaction at having no ‘religious’ beliefs.

Such an alignment of Kant with a religious optimism about moral history is too quick though. It pushes, I suspect, Kant into too Christian a mind-set, with the paradigm of moving from one temporality into another temporality: from historical progress, into the moral state. If the Rawlsian learns that he may miss transcendence more than he expected, the Christian theologian must learn that Christianity has no monopoly upon transcendence. We should begin by considering all the things that historical progress, for Kant, is not. It is not, or not straightforwardly, moral progress at

all. In his essay on *Perpetual Peace*, Kant affirms that a ‘republican constitution’, which is ‘completely compatible with the right of human beings’, could be achieved even by a ‘nation of devils (if only they have understanding)’ (*PP*, 8: 366; see also *IUH*, 8: 26; *Rel*, 6: 27, 33-34, 93-94). This is because the ‘problem’ of founding a state is not concerned with ‘the moral improvement of human beings but only the mechanism of nature’, where human beings have to ‘constrain one another to submit to coercive law and so bring about a condition of peace in which laws have force’ (*PP*, 8: 366; see also *IUH* 8:26; *Rel* 6: 27, 33-34, 93-94). In 1798 Kant writes that we can never observe ‘an ever-growing quantity’ of ‘morality with regard to intention’, but only ever ‘an increase of the products of *legality* in dutiful actions whatever their motives’ (*CF*, 7: 91). This is because we only ever have ‘*empirical* data (experiences) upon which we are founding this prediction’:

namely, the physical cause of our actions as these actually occur as phenomena; and not the moral cause. (*CF*, 7: 91)

Even the ‘realization of the’ ideal of an international ‘cosmopolitan society’, wherein all ‘external relations’ are conducted rightfully, could occur ‘without the moral foundation in humanity having to be enlarged in the least’ (*CF*, 7: 92).

Kant tracks this limitation in what we can infer from empirical deeds back to his transcendental idealism: the claim that all we can ever experience is the world as it is received through our spatial and temporal forms of intuition, where moral freedom, if it exists, and we must presuppose that it does, must exist in the world prior to, and independently of, this spatio-and temporal reception. All that we can ever experience is ‘that which appears’, or the ‘phenomenon’, and the whole history of good deeds and progress, no matter how glorious, ‘resides alone in phenomena, and not the moral cause’ (*CF*, 7: 91; see also *PP*, 8: 360).

Precisely what Kant is committing himself to with his transcendental idealism is, of course, hugely contested. Because the notion of a timeless noumenal freedom can seem so scandalous to our ‘modern sensibilities’, an attractive option is to construe transcendental idealism in less troublesome ways. Perhaps Kant really means to indicate the irreducible limitations and complexity of discerning reality through the observation of empirical phenomena, which limitations become especially pronounced when we regard the growth and formation of moral character. Alternatively, perhaps transcendental idealism is more of a grammatical reflection that ‘reasons’ operate in a conceptual space other than ‘causes’, transcendent in that they do not ‘appear’ in space and time, but without any spookier connotation. I associate my own work with strands of Kant scholarship that identify considerable continuity between his earlier rationalist metaphysics and his mature ‘critical’ philosophy<sup>xxxv</sup>. Alongside others, I even consider the continuity of this rationalist metaphysics to be compatible with Kant’s own claims to have achieved, by his own lights, a new ‘epistemic discipline’ in his later thought. Putting it briskly, the idea is that the *content* of much of what Kant believes in his early thought (God, divine creation, and non-spatial and non-temporal human souls) remains much the same in his later thought, but the *epistemic* status changes, from knowledge, to warranted and required (true) beliefs, arrived at on the basis of practical reason.

I will try to say, next, something that exponents of a less extravagant construal of transcendental idealism might be able to agree with. I will then conclude the article on a more extravagant note, with some brief comments about the lines of justification I would explore, if space and time allowed. First of all, the ‘big tent’ observation: however we construe such language, Kant does choose to talk, a lot, continuously through the 1780s and 90s, about our fundamental non-temporality, especially in relation to freedom and morality. This choice, however we construe it, subverts a progressivism about history and politics, as well as indicating a different paradigm and structure for ‘transcendence’, and hope, than that employed in the Christian traditions received by Kant.

On any interpretation of transcendental idealism, the need to identify progress in history is a ‘regulative idea’, indexed not to a hidden insight into divine purposes, but, rather, arising from our limited cognitive abilities (*CJ*, 5: 397-401). Because we cannot hope to understand how sheer mechanism ‘that no intention has ordered’ can bring about even ‘the generation of a blade of grass’ (*CJ*, 5: 400), we find it necessary to think in terms of natural teleology, especially in the sphere of biology, of which, perhaps surprisingly, human history is a sub-section<sup>xxxvi</sup>. This is a necessity that goes from the micro (the internal organic constitution of the blade of grass) to the macro (the course of that part of mechanical organic nature that we call ‘human history’). A more gifted cognizer, not constrained by receiving the world spatially and temporally, might well have no need to make regulative recourse to something beyond mechanism, in order to understand the blade of grass, or human history (*CJ*, 5: 397-398).

The hope for the ‘highest good’ in Kant’s thought has a quite different pedigree, status and destiny to any hope we might have for historical progress. Kant tells us, in the third *Critique*, that the moral proof for the existence of God as the guarantor of the highest good ‘would always remain in force even if we found in the world’, which includes that part of nature which is human history, ‘no material for physical teleology at all’ (*CJ*, 5: 478). The seam of thought that runs from the highest good to God is, Kant tells us, ‘essentially different’, indeed ‘entirely independent’, from anything that ‘concepts of nature can contain and teach’, that is from any regulative warrant, and need, to ascribe teleology to nature, which includes history (*CJ*, 5: 478). As such, belief in the highest good, which is practical, and not merely regulative, has a securer epistemic status than belief in historical progress.

The picture suggested by Kant, on the construal I am presenting, is one where history is not *preparatory* for a future moral state, but is, or might be, an emanation of a fundamental moral



reality. Those prepared to travel down more metaphysically committed paths of Kant exegesis, might say that the history of human actions, as with everything that appears, is the appearance of that which is fundamentally non-spatial and non-temporal, where there is no sense in which we move towards or further away from the noumenal dimension wherein morality resides. Everything that appears, all phenomena, are equidistant, equally disclosing and veiling of ultimate reality. As Kant puts it, ‘actions here in the world are mere *Schemata* of the intelligible [actions]’, where ‘these appearances’, the actions, are interconnected in accordance with empirical laws’, as a ‘*phenomenon* (of the character)’, where one ‘imputes’ a moral status ‘to oneself’, insofar ‘as one cognizes one’s own character only from the *phaenomenis*’ (R 5612; see also A 540/B 568; A 551/B 579). The category of morality cannot be used (or not straightforwardly) to describe how we appear, individually, collectively, or historically, but regards the ‘human being’ ‘considered as noumenon’, with ‘the object that it can set for itself as the highest end (the highest good in the world)’ (CJ, 5: 435; see also A 445-451/B 473-479; A 531-557/B 559-B586; E, 8: 334; Pr, 4: 343-4; CPrR, 5: 95-102; Rel, 6:31; R, 4225, 5611, 5612; MetM, 6: 280n). For this reason, Kant emphasizes the invisibility of moral action, stating, for example in the *Groundwork*, that ‘it is absolutely impossible by means of experience to make out with complete certainty’

a single case in which the maxim of an action otherwise in conformity with duty rested simply on moral grounds and on the representation of one’s duty. (GW, 4: 406; see also GW, 4: 407-410 and 4: 418; MetM 6: 447).

Although we ‘cannot see through’ to our fundamental disposition (*Gesinnung*), we make a fallible ‘inference’ from ‘perceptions that are only appearances of a good or bad disposition’ (Rel, 6: 71).

I would submit that some of the difficulties thought to surround a more metaphysically committed Kant, are not, in truth, entailed or required by this position, and were not held by Kant, and should

not be defended as an interpretation of Kant. The exponent of the more metaphysically committed Kant would be well advised, in my view, to slough-off the misleading nomenclature of a ‘two-worlds’ interpretation of Kant, which is conventionally foisted upon him or her. Rather, we find here, in a suggestively Platonic key, one world, but with different degrees of disclosure and unveiling of fundamental reality, with a conviction, which is not knowledge, but warranted practical belief, that fundamental reality is quite different from how it appears, although its appearance is nothing other than a manifestation of fundamental reality.

If Kant is committed to noumenal freedom, this, in itself, by Kant’s own lights, need not exclude the proper study of the textures of the appearing (everywhere but nowhere in particular) of noumenal freedom, in disciplines such as anthropology, social science, history, and psychology<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Although not widely known, Kant undoubtedly has a broad and deep interest in dimensions of experience studied by these disciplines (see especially *APV* and *MetM*). Such an interest might even be precisely what we expect of Kant, when he tells us that anthropology, for example, is a ‘way of cognizing the interior of the human being from the exterior’ (*APV*, 7: 283). This is consonant with the role of appearances outlined above, as the only, albeit precariously limited, means by which we can make inferences about our fundamental moral character. The irreducible and in-principle precariousness of the medium could even motivate careful empirical study.

I do not deny that such a conception of noumenal freedom is ‘difficult’ for us, and hardly a gripping, intuitive, or useful account, at least by itself, of the moral life. But some things which are difficult for us, might not have been so problematic for Kant, whose antennae for plausibility must be, to some extent, framed by his rationalist heritage, used to conceiving of the experienced world as a well-founded phenomenon, grounded upon a fundamentally different underlying reality. Kant could, by his own account, move a long way from Leibniz, but still not be ‘one of us’.

In Kant's chosen association of morality with the language of non-temporality, and especially on the more metaphysically committed interpretation of Kant, we discover a fascinating reassertion of a type of undercutting and omnipresent transcendence, but in a different key to the one we find in the Christian tradition. Noumenal reality sustains the experienced world, and undercuts everywhere our confident assertions about its nature, because, as with the non-spatial and non-temporal first cause of classical Christianity, it is not inserted into any one place or time in particular. Only the total transcendence guarantees such ubiquitous immanence, and serves as a source of hope that how things appear is not how things fundamentally are, alongside a constant deflation of our confident claims at absolute knowledge. There is a difference though in the source and shape of the transcendence. In Augustinian Christianity, God, the creator *ex nihilo*, is the source, with the mode of unveiling being fundamentally temporal: we live in 'this age' (*hoc saeculo*), expecting in the *eschaton* to be differently temporalized in the 'age of ages' (*saecula saeculorum*), by the gracious action of a transcendent God. In Kant, the source of the transcendence is more our own divinity, as we participate in a fundamental and invisible way in a self-transcending reason, which constitutes the moral law. We do not hope to be 'differently temporalized', but rather to be, in a fundamental way, other than temporalized, where time is the moving image of our own eternity.

In 1798, Kant asks what underlies 'the idea' of a political constitution 'in harmony with the natural right of human beings' (*CF*, 7:90). What underlies 'all political forms', Kant asserts, is a 'Platonic ideal', that is, as he goes on to explain, a '*respublica noumenon*', of which we have 'in our experience', the disclosing and veiling appearance, the '*respublica phaenomenon*' (*CF*, 7: 91). This is transcendence, but differently organized. We live not '*in hoc saeculo*', hoping for the City of God. Rather we experience the '*respublica phaenomenon*', trusting and hoping in its not-impossible and therefore to-be-believed-in foundation in the '*respublica noumenon*', with the *locus* of our hope being our own 'proper selves' (*GW*, 4: 461), moral, free, invisible, everywhere acting because

nowhere in particular. The '*respublic noumenon*', Kant insists, is not 'an empty figment of the brain', but 'rather the eternal norm for all civil organization in general' (*CF*, 7: 91). The Christian theologian might not find in Kant's thought theology's 'other', the secular, but, perhaps, another theology, for whom the 'secular' (this time) is not fundamental.

## Abbreviations

References to Kant, with the exception of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, refer to the *Akademie* edition, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (later German) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900-). These references are cited by volume: page number, and are prefaced by an abbreviation of the title of the work, as set out below. Citations to the first *Critique* are to the first ('A') or second ('B') edition. The translations referred to are those provided in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992-).

*APV* *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, in *Immanuel Kant: Anthropology. History and Education*, ed. by Günter Zöllner and Robert B. Loudon, trans. by Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7: 117-333.

*CF* *Der Streit der Fakultäten. The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), in *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7:5-115.

*CJ* *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790). *Immanuel Kant. Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5: 167-484.

- Coll* *Moral Philosophy: Collins' lecture notes* (1784-85), in *Lectures on Ethics*, ed. by Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind, trans. by Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 27: 243- 471.
- CPrR* *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788). *Critique of Practical Reason* in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, 5: 3-309.
- DR* *Danziger Rationaltheologie* (1784), 28: 1231-1319.
- E* Kant's notes on his copy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, given in Benno Erdmann, *Nachträge zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Kiel: Lipsius & Tischer, 1881).
- GW* *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1786). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, 4: 385-463.
- IUH* *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784). *Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan aim*. in *Immanuel Kant: Anthropology. History and Education*, ed. by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8: 15-31.
- LPE* *Vorlesung über die philosophische Encyclopädie* (29: 8-12).
- LPR* *Philosophische Religionslehre nach Pölitz* (1783-84). *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion* in *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. by

Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28: 993-1126.

*MD* *Metaphysik Dohna* (1792), (28: 656-690) in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28: 656-690.

*MetM* *Die Metaphysik der Sitten. The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, 6: 203-493.

*MK<sub>2</sub>* *Metaphysik K<sub>2</sub>* (early 1790s), 28: 709-816.

*ML<sub>1</sub>* *Metaphysik L<sub>1</sub>* (mid-1770s), in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28: 171-350.

*MMr* *Moral Mrongovius* (1782-1783), 27: 1395-1581.

*MV* *Metaphysik Vigilantius* (1794-1795), in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29: 943-1040.

*NTV* *Natürliche Theologie Volckmann* (1783), 28: 1131-1225.

*OIT* *Was heisst: Sich im Denken orientiren?* (1786). *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*, in *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8: 133-146.

- OP Immanuel Kant. Opus Postumum* (1786-1803), trans. and ed. Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 21:9 - 22:452.
- PP Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (1795). *Perpetual Peace: a Philosophical Sketch*, in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, 8: 341-86.
- Pr Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, (1783). *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that Will be Able to Come Forward as Science*, in *Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, ed. by Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans. by Gary Hatfield, Michael Friedman, Henry Allison and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4: 255-383.
- R Reflexionen* (1753-1804). *Reflections*, in *Notes and Fragments*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17: 229-19: 654.
- Rel Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Bloßen Vernunft* (1794). *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6: 3-202.
- TP Über der Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie Richtig sein, stimmt aber nicht für die Praxis. On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory, but it is of no Use in Practice* (1793), in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), trans. and ed. by Mary J. Gregor, 8: 275-312.



## Thomas Aquinas references

*SCG Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. and ed. by Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

*ST Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars Edition, ed. by Thomas Gilby O.P. and others, 60 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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<sup>ii</sup> John Rawls, ‘On my Religion’, in John Rawls, *A Brief Inquiry into the Meaning of Sin and Faith*, ed. by Thomas Nagel (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 261-69, p. 265

<sup>iii</sup> Rawls, ‘On my Religion’, p. 261.

<sup>iv</sup> Rawls, ‘On my Religion’, p.263.

<sup>v</sup> The tendency has been to interpret Kant either as a ‘secular’ thinker, or to emphasize his Christian commitments. For an example of the former approach see, for example, John Rawls, ‘The Unity of Reason’, in *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. by Barbara Herman (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 309-325; and for an example of the latter approach see Frederick C. Beiser, ‘Moral Faith and the Highest Good’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 588-629. Recently, some work has emerged which takes Kant’s religiosity seriously, but understands that there is considerable distance from Christian orthodoxy. See, for example, Lawrence R. Pasternack, *Kant on Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014). For my discussion of Pasternack’s treatment, where I suggest that we need to distance Kant still further from traditional Christianity, see ‘Christopher Insole on Lawrence Pasternak’s “Kant on Religion”’ (<https://virtualcritique.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/insole-on-pasternacks-kant-on-religion/>). For further discussion, see also Lawrence Pasternak’s ‘Reply to Christopher Insole’, (<https://virtualcritique.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/reply-to-christopher-insole/>).

<sup>vi</sup> See, for example, James DiCenzo, *Kant’s Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Byrne, *Kant on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Paul Guyer, *Kant* (London: Routledge, 2006), chs. 3&6.

<sup>vii</sup> For a full defence of this position, see my *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: a Theological Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 7.

<sup>viii</sup> See Stephen R. Palmquist, ‘Introduction: The Hermeneutic Background to Kant’s Religion’, in *Comprehensive Commentary on Kant’s Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), and Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: a Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>ix</sup> Frederick C. Beiser, ‘Moral Faith and the Highest Good’, p. 593.

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<sup>x</sup> Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in *Philosophical Texts*, ed. and trans. by R.S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 54-93, pp. 79-80, §28. Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace*, in *Philosophical Texts*, pp. 258-266, p. 265, §16. See the discussion below, p. xxx.

<sup>xi</sup> For my account of Kant's reaction to Christian Wolff, I am indebted to Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: a Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), ch. 2.

<sup>xii</sup> My translation.

<sup>xiii</sup> Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation*, 14, trans. W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente, in the *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: German-Latin-English*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

<sup>xiv</sup> Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation*, 16.

<sup>xv</sup> John Rawls, 'The Unity of Reason', in *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 309-325.

<sup>xvi</sup> Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in *Philosophical Texts*, ed. and trans. by R.S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 54-93, pp. 79-80, §28.

<sup>xvii</sup> Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace*, in *Philosophical Texts*, pp. 258-266, p. 265, §16.

<sup>xviii</sup> John Rawls, 'The Unity of Reason', p. 319

<sup>xix</sup> Rawls, 'The Unity of Reason', p. 321.

<sup>xx</sup> For assisting my understanding of Kant's philosophy of history, I am especially indebted to the following: Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, trans. by Marshall Farrier (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), ch. 10; Pauline Kleingeld, 'Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 16/1 (1999), pp. 59-80; Pauline Kleingeld, 'Nature or Providence? On the Theoretical and Moral Importance of Kant's Philosophy of History', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75/2 (2001), 201-219; Robert B. Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics: From Rational to Human Beings* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch.5; Robert S. Taylor, 'Kant's Political Religion: The Transparency of Perpetual Peace and the Highest Good', *The Review of Politics* 72 (2010), 1-24; Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), ch. 6.

<sup>xxi</sup> For this account of Kant's use of the concepts of 'nature' and 'providence', I am indebted to Pauline Kleingeld, 'Nature or Providence? On the Theoretical and Moral Importance of Kant's Philosophy of History', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75/2 (2001), 201-219.

<sup>xxii</sup> For a subtle statement of this position, that historical progress is 'preparatory' for moral progress, see Robert S. Taylor, 'Kant's Political Religion: The Transparency of Perpetual Peace and the Highest Good', *The Review of Politics* 72 (2010), pp. 1-24.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Rawls, 'The Unity of Reason', p. 322.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 79

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<sup>xxv</sup> Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 463.

<sup>xxvi</sup> See Paul J. Griffiths, 'Secularity and the *saeculum*', in *Augustine's City of God: a Critical Guide*, ed. by James Wetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 33-54, p. 33.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Paul J. Griffiths, 'Secularity and the *saeculum*', p. 50.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.2.

<sup>xxix</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.11.

<sup>xxx</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.16.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.17.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.12.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, p.52.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, pp.52-53.

<sup>xxxv</sup> For a full account, alongside a discussion and critique of other interpretations, see my *Kant and the Creation of Freedom*, chs. 5-6.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> For my understanding of this link between natural teleology and history, I am particularly indebted to Robert B. Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics*, pp. 141-144; and Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, pp. 215-225.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> This would be my answer to the suggestion one finds in the secondary literature that Kant's undoubted interest in these matters 'contradicts' a metaphysically committed interpretation of noumenal freedom. For such a claim see, for example, Allen Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 135-141.